

## ***TAKING RESPONSIBILITY***

**Earlier this year, the NCIX produced its *Take Responsibility* poster, in which we offered a tribute to befallen US citizens, by pointing out the need to ensure that awareness is part of our culture. Recently, we received an article from Mr. John W. Davis, an Intelligence Specialist at the US Army Space and Missile Defense Command, Huntsville, Alabama. John's words are right in step with the focus of the poster, and it is only fitting that we pass them along to our readers.**

An hour after police alerted the nation that a vehicle license plate was being sought in connection with the DC serial killer, a citizen reported it, and an arrest was made. Two alleged serial killers were off the street.

Recently, a waitress at a restaurant chain in Georgia notified authorities of an apparent criminal discussion she overheard. Three men seemed to be planning to bomb a building in Miami. After police investigated, the bomb plot was alleged to be a hoax. In both cases, these citizens did what any civic minded American should do. They reported a threat to the proper authorities. Such acts are our civic duty.

Not long ago my dad, Bill Davis, and I were comparing the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor with the suicide assaults on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. "Something a lot of people don't remember about those days," he reflected, "is that Americans were afraid. There were rumors across the land that Japanese had landed in San Francisco, at Los Angeles, and that saboteurs and spies were everywhere. Rumors spread fear, and fear fanned more fear."

The greatest human emotion is fear, and the greatest fear is fear of the unknown. It was for that very reason that President Roosevelt reminded everyone that, "The only thing we have to fear is....fear itself."

"You can't imagine what a calming effect the president's reassurance had for everyone," dad said. "We were sucker punched at Pearl, but pulled together for the fight to come. We believed the situation was dangerous, but that the right people were doing their best to take care of the nation. And it wouldn't be over till we finished it."

Today, we too might believe the enemy appears to be everywhere. He seems capable of any number of horrific means of visiting destruction on us. We feel helpless to defend ourselves against an adversary we can neither see, nor identify, nor anticipate. We feel an unspecified dread. We don't feel safe anymore. That is just what the enemy wants us to feel.

My favorite quotation came the day after the September 11th attack.

A German investigator, asked to comment on the apprehension of several al-Qa'ida terrorists in Hamburg, offered this matter of fact observation, "Don't forget. These

people are criminals. Each of these terrorists has a face, a name, and an address.” That comment, echoing President Bush’s determined assurance that we will patiently but relentlessly pursue these terrorist killers anywhere they may hide, did much to reassure Americans.

But how, Americans ask, can we take part? We want to pull together, so what do we do? The answer has been here all along; we’ve known it intuitively, but never until now really had an immediate need in this generation to act upon it.

We know that loose lips sink ships. But now we know that our eyes catch spies, and terrorists...and the criminal killers they report to.

Each of the terrorists has a face, a name, and an address, and now they too know fear. Their leaders have abandoned them, world law enforcement is seeking them, and every day more Americans become more astute in what to watch for and report. There are many practical hurdles to overcome, and the road won’t be easy.

Whereas yesterday we weren’t aware, today we know who to call if something just doesn’t seem right. We help each other. Americans are pulling together. We watch our surroundings in ways we didn’t before. We are protecting ourselves, informing ourselves, and not letting fear defeat us before we’ve entered the fight. No one today will turn away if a security problem seems to require a solution. We offer assistance to others and make sure someone takes action to protect us. If we see a better way, we speak up.

The only thing we have to fear is fear itself. Remember that every terrorist has a face, a name, and an address. We’ll get them if we help each other. We are a quarter billion Americans whose eyes are watching in restaurants, at gas stations, in the office, and on the road. Now the cowards who murdered our people really have something to fear. We are out to get them.